

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SSC-01 /070 W

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R 120655Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4696

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

USINT BAGHDAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 0744

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, KU

SUBJ: CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS LOOMS OVER REPLY TO THE AMIRI SPEECH

REF: KUWAIT 0363

1. AN IMPASSE HAS DEVELOPED BETWEEN THE GOK AND THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OVER THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY REPLY TO THE AMIRI SPEECH WHICH WAS DELIVERED DURING NOVEMBER 1975. THE AMIRI SPEECH IS AKIN TO A "STATE OF THE UNION" SPEECH OUTLINING THE ANTICIPATED PROGRAMS OF THE GOK FOR THE COMING YEAR. ACCORDING TO ARTICLE 105 OF THE CONSTITUTION THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MUST APPROVE A REPLY TO THE SPEECH WHICH "MUST BE PRESENTED TO THE AMIR." THE ASSEMBLY VOTED APPROVAL OF A REPLY ON JANUARY 20 OVER THE STRONG OBJECTION OF THE GOK TO THE LAST PARAGRAPH WHICH CHARACTERIZED THE CURRENT CABINET, AND ALL THOSE PRECEDING ITC AS "INCOMPETENT." THE CABINET, NOT UNNATURALLY, REJECTED THAT STATEMENT AS BEING CONFIDENTIAL

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UNTRUE. HOWEVER, WHEN A COMMITTEE APPROACHED THE AMIRI DIWAN TO

FIX A DATE FOR THE PRESENTATION OF THE REPLY, IT WAS TWICE REJECTED, WITH THE STATEMENT THAT " IF WHAT WAS PUBLISHED IN THE PRESS IS THE TEXT OF THE REPLY, THEN THE AMIR WOULD NOT RECEIVE THE COMMITTEE."

2. A CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS HAS THEREFORE BEEN CREATED WITH APPARENTLY ONLY TWO OPTIONS TO A CONTINUED AMIR REFUSAL TO ACCEPT THE REPLY. FIRST, THAT THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY RECONSIDERS THE REPLY AND MODIFIES THE OBJECTIONABLE LANGUAGE; OR SECOND, THAT THE AMIR DISSOLVES THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. THE ASSEMBLY WAS SCHEDULED TO DEBATE THE ISSUE AT ITS FEBRUARY 10 SESSION, BUT THIS SESSION WAS CANCELLED FOR LACK OF A QUORUM.

COMMENT: WHILE THIS IS A CONSTITUTIONAL "FIRST" FOR KUWAIT AND IS RECEIVING MUCH PUBLICITY, IT IS LIKELY THAT THE ISSUE WILL BLOW OVER WITH A MODIFICATION OF THE OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE BY THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. THERE IS NO IDENTIFIABLE GROUP IN THE ASSEMBLY WHICH IS PUSHING FOR DISSOLUTION, AND THE SPEAKER OF THE ASSEMBLY, KHALID SALIH AL-GHUNAIM, DURING AN AUDIENCE PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE FOR A PARLIAMENTARY VISIT TO INDIA, REPORTEDLY TOLD THE AMIR THAT A SUITABLE MODIFICATION TO THE REPLY COULD BE ARRANGED. SKEPTICS, HOWEVER, POINT TO A THIRD OPTION -- THAT OF A GOVERNMENT RESIGNATION -- AND NOTE THAT THE AMIRI SPEECH ISSUE PROVIDES A PRETEXT FOR THE RUMORED REALLOCATION OF PORTFOLIOS WHICH WOULD ACCOMPANY THE AMIR'S ABDICATION (REFTEL) SHAIKH SA'D AL-ABDALLAH'S RETURN FROM EXTENDED ABSENCE ABROAD PUTS EVERY IMPORTANT FAMILY MEMBER AT HOME, MEANING TIME IS RIGHT IF THIS IS TO BE THE SCENARIO FOR CHANGES WHICH THE FAMILY MAY HAVE IN MIND.
MAU

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